

Full Length Research Paper

Fame versus no name: Gauging the impact of celebrities and non-celebrities endorsement on purchase

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The use of celebrity in advertising has become a trend for companies and one of the best ways to strengthen brand image and marketing of products/services. Today, every company is promoting its products by using celebrities to gain customer's attention and thus increase the market share. Advertising ideas involve this approach, and the choice of picking right celebrity is made through these strategic motives. The important point for all companies is whether celebrity endorsement is beneficial for organization in long term or it is just to create awareness for once. Does it really increase purchase intention? The question is which factors guide customers in making decision regarding a good or a service when an organization is rendering messages through different media by the word of mouth of big celebrities. The study focuses on these aspects using Gujarat State of India. It identifies the link between celebrity and non-celebrity endorsement and consumers' perception and attitude towards the endorsed product. The study explores whether celebrity or non-celebrity endorsement helps to build a positive linkage towards the endorsed product.

Key words: Celebrity, non-celebrity, endorsement, advertisement effectiveness, purchase intention.

INTRODUCTION

Fighting to catch consumers' attention and market share, Indian companies have gone out of their ways to choose celebrities to endorse their brands. It makes tremendous sense for a brand to get hold of a celebrity for its endorsement. Presently around 400 television channels are broadcasting in India. Indian advertisement industry saw the growth of a new trend in the latter part of the 1980s. Hindi film and TV stars as well as sportspersons were engaged in endorsing top most brands. Celebrity

advertisement out of the total number of advertisements aired is as high as 25-30% in western countries and around 60% in India (Patel, 2009). Another research states that the target audience age group of 15-30 gets influenced by first cricketers, second Bollywood film stars and then music, festivals and food (Kulkarni and Gaulkar, 2005). In the Indian context, several examples can be found to establish the hypothesis that celebrity endorsements can exaggerate the overall brand.

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A well designed celebrity endorsed commercial can change the future of the brand forever (Blazey and Ganti, 2005).

A celebrity endorser used in an advertisement can be interpreted as inspirational reference group that serves as a point of comparison or reference for an individual by effectively communicating values, attitudes and providing a specific guide for behavior (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004). In general, potential hazards of celebrity endorsement are the costs, the possibility that celebrity overshadows brand image, or it can change the image and overexposure of the celebrity, especially when a celebrity becomes an endorser for many different products (For example, one of famous Indian Bollywood star endorses several brands/products starting from SUV, pesticides, water pumps, insurance, biscuits, chocolate, fabrics and so on). Non-celebrity endorsed advertisements can also gain positive 'attitudes towards the advertisement', 'attitude towards the brand' being advertised and 'intentions to purchase endorsed brands' (Mehta, 1994). This research investigates whether or not non-celebrity endorsement can be as effective as celebrity endorsement in selected FMCG product categories. Consumers in India are exposed to several new products every other day followed by marketers' differentiation, positioning techniques. Therefore, it will be interesting to investigate the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumers' buying behaviour in India. From a business perspective, this research study would be useful in understanding perceptions of Indian consumers towards celebrity and non-celebrity endorsements.

LITERATURE

Celebrity: According to McCracken (1989), "A celebrity endorser is an individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement (marketing communication)"; whereas, Pringle (2004) says "Celebrity is anyone who is familiar enough to the people he wishes to present the brand to and add values to the communication by associating with their image and reputation."

Non-celebrity: According to Mohan (2001), "A non-celebrity is a person who, prior to placement in the campaign, has no public notoriety but appears in an advertisement for the product"

The Source Credibility Model: A source/celebrity that is more expert has been found to be more persuasive (Aaker and Myers, 1987) and generate more intentions to buy the brand (Ohanian, 1991) Schumann and Thompson (1988) found that expert celebrities produce higher recall of product information than non-expert

celebrities; a possible exception to the belief that the more credible a source is, the more persuasive the source is likely to be. A source that lacks credibility can be more persuasive than a high credibility source, since those favoring the advocacy will feel a greater need to ensure that a position with which they agree is being adequately represented (Aaker and Myers, 1987).

Celebrity attractiveness

According to Erdogan (1999), attractiveness does not mean simply physical attractiveness, but includes any number of attributes that consumers might perceive in a celebrity endorser: for example, intellectual skill, personality properties, lifestyles, or athletic prowess. Along with respondents in Kahle and Homer's study (1985), they were more likely to buy an Edge razor after seeing an attractive celebrity in a magazine advertisement than an unattractive celebrity. However, as indicated earlier by both Till and Busler (1998) and Ohanian (1991), the endorser's expertise is more important than physical attractiveness in affecting attitude toward an endorsed brand. Further, Shimp (2000) found that attractiveness alone is subordinate in importance to credibility and matches up with the audience and brand. Johnson and Harrington (1998) point out those without doubt attractive celebrity endorsers positively improve attitudes towards advertising and brands, but whether they are able to create purchase intentions is uncertain.

Celebrity likeability

Celebrity likeability refers to the positive or negative feelings that consumers have toward a celebrity (Mowen and Minor, 1998). It can also be defined as the extent to which the source is viewed as behaving in a way that matches the desires of those who observe him or her. Various studies suggest that advertisement liking is one of the most important forecasters of brand liking, second only to in-going, or prior, brand attitude (Thorson, 1991). Brand liking is affected by a spokesperson's likeability. Respondents tend to like brands that are associated with the characters that they have a high regard for (Callcott and Philips, 1996). Meanwhile, Urde (1999) states that likable spokespersons increase attention toward a brand enhance brand liking and thus create a considerable impact on the consumers' purchase behavior and their loyalty towards the brand.

Celebrity expertise

Erdogan (1999) defines celebrity endorsers' expertise as 'the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions 'Respondents' actions in

response to the source's recommendations seem to vary directly with the source's perceived level of expertise and the target person's level of agreement with those recommendations. Subjects exposed to a source perceived as highly expert exhibit more agreement with the source's recommendation than did those exposed to a source with low expertise (Ohanian, 1990). The level of perceived celebrity expertise should predict celebrity endorser effectiveness.

Celebrity trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the degree of confidence consumers place in a communicator's intent to convey the assertions s/he considers most valid (Ohanian, 1990). Giffin (1967) describes favorable disposition, acceptance, psychological safety, and perceived supportive climate as favorable consequences of trust. Much of the literature supports the positive effect of trustworthiness on effectiveness. Perceived communicator trustworthiness has also been shown to produce a greater attitude change than perceived expertise (McGinnies and Ward, 1980). The extant literature on celebrity endorsers suggests that trustworthiness is an important predictor of celebrity endorsement effectiveness.

Measurement scales

Celebrity endorser is a person who advertises a product, a person well known for his/her achievements in areas which are different from the advertised product category (Friedman and Friedman, 1979). Ohanian (1990) created a scale to measure the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers through establishing the endorser's credibility. This is achieved through measuring the expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness the endorser possesses in the advertisement. Advertising is used with the aim of creating purchase desire that will ultimately lead to the purchases of products and services (Ohanian, 1990).

Celebrity endorsers are frequently used in all forms of advertising and indicate the perception of their effectiveness. The endorser's perceived expertise and trustworthiness are a means to measure the credibility of the endorser and the latter is positively associated with purchase aspirations (Ohanian, 1991) (Table 1).

These purchase aspirations implicate want and desire to purchase a product that will ultimately lead to product purchases. According to Tom et al. (1992), target audiences generally have positive feelings towards celebrity endorsers. They include effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, celebrity endorsers and purchase intention (Kamins et al., 1989); added-value of the endorsement (Agrawal and Kamakura, 1995); celebrity endorsers' positive and negative effects (Till and Shimp, 1998), congruence between product/brand and endorser

(Till and Busler, 2000), consumer association with the endorser (Till and Busler, 2000; Daneshvary and Shwer, 2000), attractiveness, credibility and trust in celebrities (Dean and Biswas, 2001). There should be congruence between the celebrity and the product in terms of characteristics such as image, expertise (Till and Busler, 1998) or attractiveness (Baker and Churchill, 1977; Kahle and Homer, 1985). The match-up hypothesis specifically suggests that the effectiveness depends on the existence of a 'fit' between the celebrity spokesperson and endorsed brand (Till and Buster, 1998). The celebrity-product match model states that attractive endorsers are more effective when promoting products used to enhance one's attractiveness (Kamins, 1990) and that the impact will be not significant in the case of a product that is unrelated to attractiveness. Kahle and Homer (1985) found that in the case of attractiveness related products the use of physically attractive celebrities increased message recall; product attributes, and purchase intention. Mehta (1994) has found that there were no significant differences between celebrity and non-celebrity endorsed advertisements concerning attitude towards the advertisement, attitude towards the brand and intentions to purchase endorsed brands. When confronted with unknown/non-celebrity endorsers, consumers were significantly more focused on the brand and its features. However, Petty et al. (1983) have found the opposite results. Celebrity endorsers pass on their symbolic meanings and acquired associations to the products they endorse easier because they have an ability to communicate with mass. Several benefits of using celebrities are nurturing trust and drawing attention on brands.

Research hypotheses:

The following research hypotheses were formulated for this study:

H1: There is a significant relationship between Purchase Behavior of products and celebrity's characteristics.

H2: There is a significant relationship between Purchase Behavior of products and Non-celebrity's characteristics.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This work studies the effectiveness of celebrity and non-celebrity endorsements on buying behavior; therefore, it is an exploratory research.

Sampling plan

Target Population: The target population comprises males and females of eighteen years and above; they are from major cities of the State of Gujarat (India): Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Vadodara, Surat, Bhavnagar Mehsana and Himatnagar.

Table 1. Summary of Scale used in the research.

Construct	Scale	Reference
Physical attractiveness	Beautiful – Not Beautiful	Kahle and Homer (1985), McGuire (1985), Kamins et al. (1989), Ohanian (1990), Till and Busler (1998), David and Benedikte (2003)
	Elegant – Plain	
	Sexy – Not sexy	
	Pleasant – not pleasant	
Trustworthiness	Dependable – Undependable	Kahle and Homer (1985), Kamins et al. (1989), Roobina (1990), Till and Busler (1998), Priester and Petty (2003)
	Honest – Dishonest	
	Reliable – Unreliable	
	Sincere – Insincere	
	Believable – Not believable	
Expertise	Having good reputation – Not having good reputation	Roobina (1990), Kamins et al. (1989), Till and Busler (1998)
	Experienced – Inexperienced	
	Knowledgeable – Unknowledgeable	
	Qualified – Unqualified	
	Skilled – Unskilled	
Likability	Professional – Unprofessional	Kahle and Homer (1985), Kamins et al. (1989), Till and Busler. (1998)
	Familiar – Unfamiliar	
	Similar – Dissimilar	
	I can relate – I cannot relate	
	Appropriate – Not appropriate	
	Logical – Illogical	

Sample size: Total 968 sample size is kept for this research.

Data collection: The data were gathered from personal interviews conducted at the convenience of the interviewer and respondents. The data were collected using face to face interview.

Data analysis

As shown in Table 2, out of the 968 respondents 55.3 percent (535) were males and 44.7 percent (433) were females. In terms of age, 35 percent (339) of the respondents were in the age group of 12-18 years as well as 19-25 years; followed by 43.7 percent (423) respondents who were between 26-35 years old. 21.2 percent (206) of the respondents were in the age group of 36 -50 and more than 50 years.

Respondents have to give their choice for advertisement from the pair of advertisement (celebrity and non-celebrity) for each product category. The selection of advertisement was on the basis of taking all the advertisements, including print advertisements as well as a television commercial. The pair of advertisements selected were on the basis of maximum frequency of appearance in television and print media. Table 3 shows choice of advertisement over another in the pair of advertisement.

In the detergent powder/soap category, 60.7% responded they like non-celebrity; same happened with oral care (51%). Bakery products were highest among non-celebrity endorsed advertisement (64.7% Kid endorsed the Oreo brand), chocolate (53%) and life insurance (64.7%). The celebrity advertisements liked by respondents were home cleaning (61% famous TV star Hussain

endorse Harpic brand toilet cleaner) and skin care (68.8% Aishwarya Rai endorse L'Oreal skin cream). Hair care is highest among celebrity endorsed advertisement (72% Ketrina Kaif endorse Pentene brand shampoo), followed by snack food (71.7% Parmeeti Chopra endorse Kurkure), tea (53.9%, Saif Ali Khan endorse Tajmahal Tea), soft drink (70.7%, M.S. Dhoni endorse Pepsi).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data were analyzed by SPSS. In this study, four types of endorser's characteristics (i) physical attractiveness, (ii) Trustworthiness, (iii) Expertise and (iv) Likability factors were tested with the help of twenty items and using a 7 - point scale (Table 4). The results of the hypothesis related to relationship between purchasing behavior of various products and celebrity's characteristics were partially supported. Detergent, oral care, bakery, skin care and tea product were partially supported, whereas home cleaning, hair care, snack food, chocolate, soft drink are those products, whose hypotheses were rejected. This result is matched with Till and Busler (1998), on the match up hypothesis in relation to endorser expertise. They suggest that its importance is limited by the degree to which attractiveness "fits" well with the advertised product. Thus, for example, physical attractiveness might be useful when selling cosmetics

Table 2. Demographic profile of respondents.

Profile of respondents			
Characteristics	Measuring variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	535	55.3
	Female	433	44.7
Age	12 to 18 years	29	3
	19 to 25 years	310	32
	26 to 35 years	423	43.7
	36 to 50 years	193	19.9
	More than 50 years	13	1.3
Educational Qualification	Up to HSC	121	12.5
	Graduate	454	46.9
	Post Graduate	372	38.4
	Other	21	2.2
Occupation	Business	88	9.1
	Service	393	40.6
	Professional	75	7.7
	Student	226	23.3
	Housewife	182	18.8
	Other	04	0.4
Annual Family Income	Below Rs. 1 Lac	98	10.1
	Rs. 1 lac. to 3 lac.	294	30.4
	Rs. 3 Lac to 7 Lac	374	38.6
	Rs. 7 Lac to 12 Lac	163	16.8
	More than 12 Lac	39	4.0

Table 3. Likeness of celebrity and non-celebrity advertisement for selected product categories.

Category	Advertisement	Frequency	Percentage
Detergent powder/soap	Celebrity (Salman Khan)	380	39.3
	Non Celebrity	588	60.7
Home cleaning	Celebrity (Hussain)	590	61.0
	Non Celebrity	378	39.0
Oral Care	Celebrity (Shahrukh Khan)	471	48.7
	Non Celebrity	497	51.3
Skin Care	Celebrity (Aishwarya Rai)	666	68.8
	Non Celebrity	302	31.2
Hair Care	Celebrity (Ketrina Kaif)	697	72.0
	Non Celebrity	271	28.0
Bakery products	Celebrity (Amitabh Bachchan)	342	35.3
	Non Celebrity	626	64.7
Snack food	Celebrity (Parneeti Chopra)	694	71.7
	Non Celebrity	274	28.3
Chocolates	Celebrity (Ketrina Kaif)	455	47.0
	Non Celebrity	513	53.0
Tea	Celebrity (Saif Ali Khan)	522	53.9
	Non Celebrity	446	46.1
Soft drinks	Celebrity (MS Dhoni)	684	70.7
	Non Celebrity	284	29.3

Table 4. Regression analysis of purchase behavior of product categories.

Product category	Measurement scale	Celebrity			Non-celebrity		
		β	p value	Result	β	p value	Result
Detergent products	Physical attractiveness	0.030	0.287		0.021	0.431	
	Trustworthiness	0.018	0.574	Partially accepted	0.001	0.980	Rejected
	Expertise	-0.111	0.001		-0.034	0.350	
	Likability	2.480	0.924	-0.008	0.801		
Home cleaning	Physical attractiveness	0.015	0.573		0.030	0.222	
	Trustworthiness	-0.018	0.558	Rejected	0.025	0.462	Partially accepted
	Expertise	-0.039	0.213		-0.082	0.018	
	Likability	-0.012	0.706	0.022	0.480		
Oral Care	Physical attractiveness	-0.002	0.938		0.001	0.980	
	Trustworthiness	-0.073	0.034	Partially accepted	-0.025	0.498	Rejected
	Expertise	-0.010	0.775		-0.007	0.863	
	Likability	0.006	0.857	0.004	0.912		
Skin Care	Physical attractiveness	0.005	0.882		0.006	0.845	
	Trustworthiness	-0.095	0.008	Partially accepted	-0.050	0.196	Rejected
	Expertise	-0.014	0.699		-0.028	0.483	
	Likability	-0.001	0.970	0.048	0.190		
Hair Care	Physical attractiveness	0.045	0.141		0.043	0.128	
	Trustworthiness	-0.050	0.161	Rejected	-0.051	0.186	Rejected
	Expertise	-0.031	0.387		-0.044	0.271	
	Likability	-0.049	0.170	0.014	0.701		
Bakery products	Physical attractiveness	0.053	0.069		0.001	0.972	
	Trustworthiness	-0.050	0.138	Partially accepted	-0.041	0.266	Partially accepted
	Expertise	0.037	0.275		0.080	0.033	
	Likability	-0.071	0.035	-0.068	0.045		
Snack food	Physical attractiveness	0.003	0.925		0.043	0.658	
	Trustworthiness	-0.044	0.188	Rejected	-0.051	0.200	Partially accepted
	Expertise	0.002	0.945		-0.044	0.268	
	Likability	-0.031	0.351	-0.070	0.035		
Chocolates	Physical attractiveness	-0.019	0.506		0.022	0.388	
	Trustworthiness	-0.044	0.170	Rejected	-0.029	0.396	Rejected
	Expertise	0.023	0.486		-0.013	0.713	
	Likability	-0.018	0.575	-0.033	0.302		
Tea	Physical attractiveness	0.064	0.035		0.018	0.522	
	Trustworthiness	-0.035	0.322	Partially accepted	0.003	0.936	Rejected
	Expertise	-0.074	0.037		-0.020	0.602	
	Likability	0.060	0.087	-0.050	0.161		
Soft drink	Physical attractiveness	-0.002	0.957		0.006	0.835	
	Trustworthiness	-0.042	0.263	Rejected	-0.007	0.867	Rejected
	Expertise	-0.065	0.084		-0.036	0.385	
	Likability	0.040	0.276	0.009	0.812		

Source: Primary data.

but not when selling computers; same was concluded by Varsha Jain et al. (2009) on cerebral products like books and healthcare products, they would not prefer celebrities. For non-celebrity endorsers only three products, home cleaning (Lizol tile cleaner, Expert spoke person used in Ad.), bakery (Orio biscuit, Kid used in Ad.) and snack food (Bingo,) hypothesis were partially supported. The advertisement selected under this category is effective. Majority of products endorsed by celebrities are liked and having positive effect of endorsement. This is in accordance with Erdogan (1999) and Kamins (1990), who proved that the presence of celebrity endorsers affects purchase decisions of consumers positively; therefore, producers and retailers have always preferred to use celebrity endorsements in order to sell their products.

This study found that consumers exposed to celebrity endorsement significantly differ from consumers exposed with a non-celebrity endorser on endorser's physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and likability. Home cleaning and snack food are the two product categories we found in which non-celebrity endorsement is more effective. Celebrities do have some common characteristics which include their recognition, status or their popularity but each celebrity may have his or her own unique image or cultural meaning which has been identified by McCracken (1989). So it can be said that a celebrity may be effective endorser of a product; however, he or she can endorse another product with the same effectiveness (McCracken, 1989). Commercials that do not use famous celebrities have been enjoying considerable success of using non-celebrity. Indeed, relatively unknown models have helped to add a touch of reality to commercials. Non-celebrity models and real life settings are effective in increasing persuasive power and gaining consumers' sympathy.

Limitation and future research

In the celebrity and non-celebrity chosen in advertisements, the researcher presents respondents with comparisons of celebrities versus non-celebrity (unknown individuals). The studies are generally compared to an unknown (e.g. Friedman et al., 1976). This may not accurately depict a realistic alternative to a celebrity endorsement. When companies use an unknown, the advertising campaigns generally do not appear identical to those using a celebrity. Only the questionnaire snapshots of advertisement are shown; cannot give all the details of endorsed products. The assumption is respondents have to recall advertisement and present their views. Future research should replicate in other product/service categories of high involvement.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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